

BUDGET PROCESS

We had projected and posted a timeline for the budget process, which was placed on the KSD website. However, unforeseen circumstances, led to required changes.

Process had been outlined but was changed due to new factors:

1. Covid restricted the ability to meet in person. Recognizing that there were only 2 members of the community who attended the virtual Budget consultation meeting, usually held in person, we added a survey. The online survey results were posted.
2. The Division was not granted the ability to advertise for a permanent Secretary-Treasurer. The “term” position allowance from Manitoba Education did not attract candidates.
3. In January, the Division hired a retired Secretary-Treasurer to remotely assist with the budget. All other Secretary-Treasurer roles were assumed internally.
4. There was a delay in receiving Funding information from Manitoba Education. Usually anticipated in early January but this year it was received the first week of February. This delay affected the Board’s initial timeline and ability to complete the budget in the expected time frame. Despite this late information the March 31st deadline remains the same for all Divisions.
5. Several budget committee meetings occurred to review Division data, trends, spending, expenditures, revenues, etc. This was one of the most difficult budget processes ever undertaken for KSD due to the lack of surplus funds. It also generated many additional meetings. The division had already been mandated to cut the previous year.
6. The Chair of the Finance Committee presented the preliminary budget considerations at the virtual Board meeting. The community was asked to provide written questions to be addressed.
7. Recognizing that the consultation meetings, originally posted, had not been accommodated due to the delay, there was a change in process to allow for the feedback/suggestions after the Board meeting.
8. From Tuesday-Friday, meetings were conducted with all school leadership teams affected by cuts to review potential reduction and determine new suggestions/strategies to meet individual school needs.
9. Ten letters (community, staff and union) were received for questions and suggestions.
10. Questions were grouped according to themes and answers provided. These were posted on KSD website on Friday.
11. The Budget committee recognizes that the cuts to the budget cannot be changed. However, after the consultation, the Division Office staff will be reviewing areas to look at potential alternatives to see if some staffing might be retained.

WHAT AFFECTED THE BUDGET

1. Last year, the Division/Board was required to make additional cuts which dipped into division reserves.
2. Govt removal of special levy reduced revenue and flexibility of spending to meet needs.
3. Accrual of salaries for impending negotiations meant a further loss in potential revenue.
4. Steady enrollment decline over the past decade has mean less revenue to the division.
5. We have continued to keep staffing levels, despite the loss of revenue and enrolment decline which has continue for the past decade.

FUNDING

The funding of school programs is established in the provincial government in The Public Schools Act, the Funding of Schools Program Regulation and associated regulations. All operating and capital support is administered through the Education Funding Branch and the Public Schools Finance Board.

Base supports – These funds are based on enrolment numbers. They include instructional support, sparsity support (for northern schools), curricular materials, technology, library services, student services, counseling and guidance, PD, etc. Each area is funded by student FTE (full time equivalency) and receives a certain amount.

I.e. PD (Professional Development) money is determined in the division as \$39 per FTE and additional \$12 per FTE for being more than 350 km away from Winnipeg. This is what is allotted and what we receive at KSD. In the past, the division has supplemented this amount quite substantially with additional funds – which we no longer can do.

I.e. Counselling and Guidance is funded at \$83 per FTE students. This is about a third of the funding for the current services which are provided at KSD. Without additional funding, and declines in student enrolment, we do not have additional funds to supplement this area. Additionally, with reduced student numbers, the service needs are reduced.

Categorical Supports – These provide funds for Transportation, Special Needs, Senior Years Technology, EAL (English as a Second Language), Indigenous Academic Achievement, French Language Education, Literacy and Numeracy, etc. This funding has specific requirements or guidelines that must be followed for programs, services, staffing, etc. that must be maintained. The Division cannot take from one area and place it in another. The money must go to support the area in the category. A formula calculates allotment but enrollment will dictate final amounts received at the division level.

Grants – Some people are unaware of additional funding received through grants which help sustain programs and staffing in some of the schools. These are outside of the base and categorical supports. They help fund or further sustain programs which could not be delivered without the monetary supplements. I.e. This could include the Kelsey Learning Center, French Immersion, Hair styling, Northern Learning and Support Services, etc. At times, we hear comments about removing certain programs although this would not provide any gains to the division.

REDUCTIONS

There have been concerns over perceived reductions to services. i.e. If two classes are removed due to a 50 FTE student decline, then the two teachers or EAs associated with the classes are no longer needed, since there are no students to teach. Services directly relate to that class or school would also be reduced since there are fewer students in the school. However, this would may not have a direct impact on the services in other departments since repairs, maintenance, cleaning or transportation still need to occur.

Reductions are governed by seniority clauses in the collective agreements. Enrolment drives funding, staffing and services.

WHERE DID THE BOARD COMMITTEE LOOK FOR REDUCTIONS?

The Finance Committee and Board looked at every part of the Division, in more depth than was ever done before. We understand that all pieces of running the Division cannot be seen from afar, and it takes time to review spending, needs, services, salaries, supports, etc. Some departments were previously cut and received cuts again this time around I.e. Division Office. Other areas were not touched due to a Division's need for the services or because funding is allotted differently. Cutting in one area does not mean that the savings can be transferred to another department or area. The committee cannot simply look at numbers, but must look at the categories, funding and workloads. We know that each group understands its own work environment and had an opportunity to voice ideas, suggestions and concerns - but it is the Committee who is tasked at looking at all parts within the whole system to continue to deliver quality programs and services for all K-12 students.